



## Sickness and Absence Policy

### 1. Introduction

- 1.1 The purpose of this policy is to ensure that the operational efficiency of Kingsbury Parish Council (KPC) can be maintained whilst an employee is absent from work for sickness or injury-related reasons.
- 1.2 This policy also seeks to provide guidance, security and support to the employee during periods of ill-health.
- 1.3 KPC values the contribution the employee plays in ensuring the successful running of the Council and greatly misses that contribution when an employee is unable to work for whatever reason.
- 1.4 This Policy should be read in conjunction with KPCs Health and Safety (KPC-POL-22), Disciplinary and Grievance policies (KPC-POL-13), and the employee's Contract of Employment.

### 2. Key Principles

- 2.1 KPC will support the employee who has genuine grounds for absence.
- 2.2 The employee is asked and expected to take responsibility for achieving and maintaining good attendance. The employee should refer to their Contract of Employment for their own entitlements to sick pay (see also Para 4 below).
- 2.3 KPC respects the confidentiality of all information relating to an employee's sickness.
- 2.4 This Policy will be implemented in line with all Data Protection legislation and the Access to Medical Records Act 1988.

### 3. Procedure

- 3.1 If the employee is unable to attend work through sickness, accident or personal circumstances he/she must inform the Chair by phone or in person of the reason for their absence by no later than 10am on the first morning of absence. If the Chair is not available, the employee should contact the Vice Chair of the Council.
- 3.2 The employee should indicate the reason for absence and, if possible, how long they expect to be absent. If the absence is for a period of less than seven days, the employee should complete a Return-to-Work Discussion/Interview Form (RTW1) available from the KPC HR Committee and set out in Appendix 1.
- 3.3 For an absence of more than seven days, employees must obtain fit notes issued by a doctor or any other medical professional covering the entire period of absence.
- 3.4 Where absenteeism appears unreasonable or unwarranted, employees may be liable for disciplinary action for misconduct.

3.5 The employee is expected to mitigate their absence due to sickness or injury by not taking part in activities or events that are likely to hinder a return to work.

#### 4. **Sickness Pay**

4.1 Sick pay will be paid in accordance with the employees' contract of employment.

#### 5. **Potential amendments before return to work**

5.1 The employee's doctor might indicate on a fit note that the employee "may be fit for work". If this option is selected the doctor will also identify potential amendments that should be made, selecting from:

- phased return to work
- amended duties
- altered hours
- and workplace adaptations

5.2 If a fit note, suggesting amendments for a return to work is received, KPC will contact the employee and arrange for a meeting with the employee. At this meeting the suggested amendments will be discussed with the aim of facilitating the employees' return to work.

5.3 If the suggested amendments are not possible the employee will remain on sick leave. If the suggested amendments are possible the employee will return to work, but regular reviews will be carried out to ensure that the amendments are adequate.

5.4 It should be noted that any amendments are not to be viewed as a permanent change to the contract of employment.

#### 6. **Return to work**

6.1 Employees should expect a "return to work" meeting with the Chair on their first day back in the office after any period of absence, to ensure that the employee is fit to work, that all the support the employee needs is in place and to update the employee on developments and their workload.

6.2 Requests for temporary adjustments to the employee's working conditions will be considered by KPC and will be accommodated wherever possible and if KPCs circumstances permit, subject to section 5 above.

6.3 If the employee is experiencing frequent periods of absence, the Chair will explore with the employee whether there is any underlying reason for the frequency of the absences and whether further support is necessary. Where no underlying reason is identified the Chair will set up an informal meeting with the employee to discuss the problem. (See Appendix 1 – RTW1).

#### 7. **Necessary Medical Information**

7.1 KPC may request a fit note issued by a doctor or other medical professional for frequent periods of absence of seven days or less or where there appears to be an unacceptable pattern of absence. In such circumstances KPC will not reimburse the doctor's/medical professional's costs for providing the fit note.

- 7.2 Where an employee has frequent absences or there is a long-term absence KPC will need to gain as much information about the employee's medical condition as possible. In these circumstances KPC may request the employee's permission to contact their GP and ask for a medical report on the employee's condition. The employee may ask their GP to show them a copy of this report.
- 7.3 KPC may also request the employee to see an occupational health adviser to advise the employee and KPC on the best way to support the employee.
- 7.4 KPC reserves the right to require the employee to be examined by a practitioner of its choice in order to seek a medical opinion.
- 7.5 A refusal to grant permission for contact with a GP or to cooperate with an occupational health adviser will prevent KPC from gaining a proper understanding of the reason for the employee's absences.
- 7.6 The employee will need to be aware that as a result, KPC will not be able to properly consider any medical condition in any formal review under the Absence Management Procedure.

## **8. Disability and Capability**

- 8.1 If the employee has a condition that means he/she might be considered disabled within the meaning of the Equality Act 2010, KPC will attempt to make reasonable adjustments to their job to accommodate their requirements. The employee will be fully consulted at all times.

## **9. Return of Council's Equipment**

- 9.1 If the employee is off sick for an extended period (e.g. two week or more) KPC will require them to return Parish Council equipment until they are well enough to return to work.
- 9.2 If the employee does not return to work following a period of sickness absence, the employee will be required to return all outstanding Parish Council equipment on the date of termination of their employment.

## **10. Absence Management Procedure**

- 10.1 In the event of the employee having frequent short-term absences which are affecting their work, or an employee having an extended ill health absence, KPC will institute an appropriate absence management policy in consultation with the employee.
- 10.2 This procedure is non-contractual and does not form part of the terms and conditions of employment with KPC (Refer to Appendix 2).

## **11. Time off for Appointments, Emergencies and Personal Commitments**

- 11.1 Reasonable time-off will be allowed for attendance at appointments providing the matter has been discussed with the Chair/Vice Chair prior to the absence.

## **12. Data Protection**

12.1 The Council will treat personal data collected during the absence management process in accordance with its data protection policy on processing special categories of personal data. Information about how employee’s data is used and the basis for processing employee’s data will be provided in KPCs employee privacy notice. When relying on legitimate interests as the legal ground for processing your data, you can object to the processing.

13. **Reviews**

This is a non-contractual procedure which will be reviewed from time to time.

**Adopted at the Parish Council Meeting on 18th September 2024 (Minute 388)**  
**Review due September 2027**

**Revision Control**

| <b>Revision</b> | <b>Details of Change</b> |
|-----------------|--------------------------|
| Sep 24          | New                      |

Appendices:

Appendix 1: RETURN TO WORK DISCUSSION/INTERVIEW FORM (RTW1)

Appendix 2: ABSENCE MANAGEMENT PROCEDURE FOR FREQUENT SHORT-TERM ABSENCES